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CRUELTY THE NATURAL AND INSEPARABLE CON-
SEQUENCE OF SLAVERY, AND BOTH DIAMETRI-
CALLY OPPOSITE TO THE DOCTRINE AND SPIRIT
OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION :

REPRESENTED IN

S E R M O N,

PREACHED ON

SUNDAY, MARCH 11th, 1792,

AT

HEMEL-HEMPSTEAD, HERTS.

BY JOHN LIDDON.

L O N D O N :

SOLD BY C. DILLY, POULTRY; M. GURNEY, N^o 138, HOL-
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SLAVERY

INCONSISTENT WITH

TRUE CHRISTIANITY.

PSALM LXXII. 14.

HE SHALL REDEEM THEIR SOUL FROM DECEIT AND
VIOLENCE: AND PRECIOUS SHALL THEIR BLOOD
BE IN HIS SIGHT.

CHRISTIANITY is a system of pure benevolence. Its origin is the love of God; and its end is human happiness. *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.* To accomplish this glorious end, all the doctrines and actions of Jesus Christ were directed. *He went about doing good.*

The real disciples of Jesus Christ enter into his views, and imbibe his spirit. They become, in the glorious cause of lessening human misery, and of promoting human happiness, *workers together with him.*

Slavery inconsistent

This is the most glorious of all causes. Here the warmest zeal may spend itself, and promote the happiness of mankind. For this is the distinguishing peculiarity of Christ's disciples, *they are zealous of good works*: for they are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in the practice of them.

Good works have different degrees of importance; and each that presents itself, should be attended to in its place. But those should occupy most of our attention and zeal, which promise the greatest and most general advantage. Such is that I am going to recommend. It is the abolition of a trade which is founded in the violation of all the rules of justice, and which does violence to all the feelings of humanity. It is a trade which brings certain misery on the victims of it; and involves all who are concerned in carrying it on, in a great degree of guilt.

Among many other evils necessarily connected with it, it prevents the introduction of Christianity into Africa; and naturally must excite strong prejudices against it, amongst a people who have no idea of that strange distinction we are often obliged to make between the principles of Christianity, and the conduct of those who call themselves Christians. These are the ridicule of Atheists, if any such there really be, and the most powerful reasons that Deists can produce. Truth obliges us to add, *Such are the greatest enemies of true Christianity.*

It

It becomes real Christians to remove this prejudice; and to convince the oppressed Africans that Christianity is not their enemy, but their best friend. For it is owing to the genuine influence of Christian principles, that the abolition of the slave-trade is now attempted; and that Christians of all denominations are now uniting to fulfil the predictions respecting the happiness of all nations, under the reign of Christ, who, by the influence of his gospel, shall deliver the captive from bondage: for *he shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.* In the case of the Africans especially, may this *soon* be realized!

In this discourse I shall avoid all those arguments which are generally used on both sides of the question, and which are taken from the treatment of the slaves. It is admitted, some of their masters may be as humane and tender as their interest in the lives and health of their slaves may dictate; or as the nature of a government against the inclinations of the governed, will admit. The government of slaves is a government of *force*; and the severity used must be in proportion to the dislike discovered by the slaves, and to the degree of punishment necessary to break their spirits, and tame them to submission. If this necessarily arises out of the very nature of slavery, when in the hands of men *naturally humane*, what must be its dreadful effects in the hands of those who are destitute of principle; who, *naturally unfeeling*, and accustomed to cruelty,
are

are not only callous to the cries of the wretched, but take an infernal delight in the miseries of mankind? That there are such characters concerned in the slave-trade, the evidence taken before the House of Commons on that horrid business, to the disgrace of human nature, too plainly proves.

I will then, however, just observe, the whole process of that diabolical traffic is marked with cruelty and blood; and many parts of it have something so surpassing any previously-formed notions, that humanity *starts back with horror* at reading the account, and decency forbids the relation of too many instances of wanton barbarity. On the coast of Africa, whence the slaves are stolen, all the rules of justice are violated, and all the feelings of humanity are outraged to such a degree, that it would be incredible, were it not so well authenticated. On their passage to the West Indies, they suffer all the miseries which human nature can endure; and thousands have there died under the united pressure of their inward feelings, the chains with which they were laden, the dungeons in which they were confined, and the cruelties they suffered from those who were about them. When in the plantations, their lives are indeed embittered by the hardest bondage, and *the iron literally enters into their souls*. Some, for trifling faults, are scourged with cart-whips, ebony brushes, and other instruments of cruelty, till they are incapable of lying down; and many die under their punishments. Others

have their ears cut off, their noses slit, their arms and legs chopped off, at the caprice of their cruel masters: and when they are old, they are turned away to starve, or purposely driven to acts of violence, that their masters may be rewarded for taking away their lives. We have now no occasion to turn our thoughts to the infernal regions, to learn refinements in cruelty. We have only to read the accounts of the treatment which negroes meet with in the West Indies, and that will exceed all that men in general have conceived of the cruelty and cool deliberate malice of devils!

Nor are these cruelties exercised only on the men; the softer sex come in for their share. Even women with child are not exempted from the strokes of the whip; and some of them miscarry, and die, under the cruelties they are obliged to suffer. And, what is still worse, if worse there can be, the young handsome female slaves are sent on board the ships, and compelled to prostitute themselves for hire. Should they not bring home money enough to satisfy the avarice of their masters and mistresses, though perhaps they could obtain no more, they have been known to suffer the most cruel punishments. I have been as short as possible in giving you this dreadful account. After this, can you be surprised, that the slaves sometimes struggle to free themselves from their oppressors? Can their struggles be called rebellion? Is it matter of punishment, that they sometimes starve themselves? Can it

it be wondered at, that they meet death with joy? In one instance, we are told, no less than fourteen, driven to desperation, ran together into the woods, and cut their throats *. The greatest wonder is, that they have submitted to their sufferings *so long*. Surely the patience of the Africans must far exceed that of the Europeans!

But it is not my design to dwell on their treatment. If the *principle* of slavery be indefensible, the kindest treatment will not justify its continuance; if it be defensible, the cruellest treatment of many will not justify its abolition. It would then require only regulation. The slaves in that case should be put under the protection of the law; and the masters made answerable for the abuse of their authority. From this, even parents are not exempt. But if the principle of slavery be unjust, as undoubtedly it is, it will admit of *no regulation*; it ought to be *abolished*. For who can think of regulating the worst of crimes? Cruelty, in this dreadful business, is not an accident, which must happen in all sorts of government, even parental; but it is an effect, a necessary consequence. Tyranny can only be supported by force; and every fresh exertion is an additional act of cruelty. If one degree of cruelty be not sufficient, another must be added, or the authority must be given up. This

* See *Abstract of the Evidence given before the House of Commons*, for the account and truth of this and of all which has been advanced.

reasoning will apply to all sorts of tyranny, civil or religious. A supposed case in religion, and that the mildest, will illustrate this idea.

Suppose a Christian to live under a government which admits of no mode of worship, but that which is adopted by the civil magistrate. This Christian reads, and thinks; and he comes to a conclusion in his own mind, which differs from that which the civil magistrate draws from the same premises. He thinks it right to follow his convictions, and to communicate his ideas to others. He does so. This comes to the ears of the magistrate, who is himself a professed Christian. He sends for the man, informs him of what he has heard, and wishes to know from himself, whether the report be true? The man has no idea of concealment in matters of religion; but thinks it his duty to avow his principles, and to *render a reason to every man who asketh him, of the hope that is in him.* To his surprise, the magistrate informs him, that he must for the future keep his sentiments entirely to himself. With this charge he is dismissed. He thinks his sentiments of importance, and that it is his duty to make them known. He acts agreeably to his convictions. He is sent for by the magistrate again. What must the magistrate do? He may disavow a spirit of persecution; he may be a man of the greatest humanity; he may profess personal friendship; but the principle he has adopted is in opposition to his feelings. Conscience will not suffer the Christian

supposed to conform; the principle of governing consciences will not suffer the magistrate to indulge his humane feelings. He must punish. He must go on from mild to severe, till the man is either subdued or destroyed. Thus, all tyranny is founded in injustice, and cannot be supported without cruelty. This reasoning applies to the subject before us. The Slave-trade and Slavery are unjust; and if one degree of cruelty be not sufficient to keep the slave in subjection, a greater must be added.

Christianity disapproves of such a trade. Christ came to *preach deliverance to the captive*: and, as his doctrine spreads, he will deliver slaves of every description *from deceit and violence, and shew that their blood is precious in his sight*. For, the Slave-trade is *diametrically opposite to the Christian religion*—therefore *no Christian ought to engage in the Slave-trade*—and every Christian ought to use all his influence to put an end to this dreadful traffic. These three propositions I shall endeavour to confirm.

I. *The Slave-trade is diametrically opposite to the Christian religion*. For the Christian religion is founded in *justice*; it breathes nothing but *compassion*; and to produce the highest degree of *moral excellence and human happiness*, is its professed end, and direct tendency.

The sum and substance of Christianity, as it respects the intercourse of men, in all their connections, is *impartial justice*. Thus, our Lord, Matt. vii. 12. *All things whatsoever ye would that*

then should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Apply this rule to the practice of stealing men and women from their dearest connections; of cruelly confining them in a dungeon, which destroys many, and endangers the lives of all; and of afterwards selling them to the hardest bondage, and subjecting them, through life, to the most cruel treatment which human beings can suffer. Then let any person ask himself, if the negroes were strong enough, and had arrived to that degree of depravity, to steal, enslave, and misuse all the English of whose persons they could possess themselves, whether he should approve their conduct as founded in *justice*? It requires no hesitation. There is not a man born who would have the hardness to say he should. There is not a man born who would not think himself authorised to use all sorts of means to free himself from his oppressors, or who could charge himself with guilt, if, to get his liberty, he were to fire his tyrant's house, or plunge a dagger in his heart. If he who robs another on the highway, is supposed by the laws of England to forfeit his life on the gallows *justly*, what does he deserve who steals the persons of men, and treats them afterwards with infernal cruelty? Nothing need be added on the subject of *justice*.

Christianity is a system of *compassion*. It breathes nothing else. It discovers to us, *God, as a father, pitying his children, though rebellious; and teaches*

men to have *compassion* on each other. No man is to be an indifferent spectator of the sufferings of his fellow-men. His *compassion* is not to be limited to any particular sect or party. It is to have no bounds but human nature. This is the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ, in that beautiful history or parable of the good Samaritan. The conduct of bigotry and hypocrisy is finely exposed in the persons and conduct of the Priest and Levite; who, forgetting the practical part of their religion, (a circumstance but too common even to the present day) which glorifies God by doing good to men, looked on the man robbed, wounded, and half dead, but administered no relief. Such a conduct could only raise expectation, and disappoint it. But, in the behaviour of the Samaritan, we see the true spirit of real religion, which teaches those who profess it to imitate their *Heavenly Father, who maketh his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, on the just and on the unjust.* Nor can there be a more powerful argument in favour of true Christianity, than that it teaches men *to love one another.* How absurd and cruel would it appear, if, when a fellow-creature in distress were to apply for relief, instead of affording it, we were to require of him an account of his faith; and, if that did not correspond with ours, to refuse him our assistance. Such a religion would be an injury to mankind.

Christianity teaches that *God hath made all nations of one blood*---that mankind are *brethren*---that it is
their

their duty and interest to promote each others happiness. Should a Christian, therefore, be surrounded by Mahometans, Jews, and Idolaters, his duty would be to behave to them with respect, and treat them as his brethren. Nor would this by any means discover an indifference as to his own religious principles; but, on the contrary, be the best means of manifesting their superior excellence. It is by his spirit and conduct, that he is to shine as a light; and the Apostle considers this as the most powerful argument to effect what nothing else can, even to *put to silence the ignorance of foolish men!* Those Christians who are for letting truth make its own way by its native strength, best understand it; and those who exemplify its doctrines in their general conduct, are its best friends. It is the glory of a Christian to imitate his Master, who was *full of compassion, and went about doing good.* Is not the Slave-trade diametrically opposite to christian compassion? As it is founded in injustice, so it is supported by *cruelty.* If true *compassion* enters the breast of the master, the captive must be set free. In a state of slavery among the Greeks, far less cruel and debasing than this, some were called to the knowledge of Christianity, and professed it. They excited the *compassion* of the Apostle. He exhorts Christians to *sympathize with them; to remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them.* But can there be sympathy in stealing men, in putting them in chains, in preventing them from acquiring property,

perty, in depriving them of all the social enjoyments of life, in exercising every kind of cruelty, in order to force them to labour beyond their strength, for the advantage of their oppressors? *Compassion*, then, is entirely out of the question.

The end of Christianity is the attainment of *moral excellence*. To this Christians are appointed: for this Christ lived and died; and to produce this, is the end of every doctrine, precept, promise, and ordinance of the Gospel. This is so plain, that it requires no arguments to prove it. Is not the Slave-trade in direct opposition to all this? Can it do any thing but debase and deprave? With respect to the masters, the light of truth must be put out, the voice of conscience must be silenced, and the feelings of humanity must be extinguished. Neither of these can subsist in the breast of a Slave-trader. With respect to the slaves, they must be kept in ignorance; for should they be made acquainted with their rights, it would be dangerous to their masters power. But why multiply arguments? Let the voice of true Christianity be heard. *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Moral excellence is the end of Christianity: moral depravity the consequence and the end of slavery.*

Human

Human happiness is another object of the Christian religion. The Slave-trade is in direct opposition to this. The one leads to the highest degree of felicity; the other to the lowest degree of misery, both of mind and body, that human nature can endure.

Thus, in every point of view, Christianity and slavery are diametrically opposite. Christianity is *justice, compassion, moral excellence, and human felicity*. The Slave-trade is *injustice, cruelty, depravity, and human misery*.—My next proposition follows of course.

II. *No Christian ought to engage in the Slave-trade.* There is no view we can take of the Christian life, which does not forbid a Christian to defile himself with so execrable a traffic. The Christian life may be considered as an expression of *gratitude*—a course of *obedience* to his Divine Master—a close *imitation* of the example of Jesus Christ—or an *example* for others to imitate. But each view makes directly against dealing in the persons and miseries of mankind.

If the Christian life be considered as an expression of *gratitude* to God for his favours, it obliges the Christian to express that gratitude in a way most pleasing to the Father of all mercies. Its genuine language is, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his goodness to me!* My time, my property, my influence, my powers of body and mind, and my inclinations too, are all his. I only
wait

wait to embrace every proper opportunity to give vent to my grateful feelings, in a way most agreeable to the purity and benevolence of his nature. Suppose the Slave-trade to offer itself to a Christian, under such an impression of divine goodness: how would the man feel on such an occasion? Would he embrace it with pleasure, or reject it with contempt?—Could he even think of it without indignation and horror? Could any of the common known terms, by which men express their detestation, be strong enough to convey a full idea of the abhorrence he felt? He would consider the Slave-trade, in all its branches, as the most heinous affront to that Being who *is full of compassion*, and whose purity is without a spot. *He cannot look upon iniquity*, but with abhorrence. How must he behold the Slave-trade? *Gratitude* obliges the Christian to stand at the greatest distance from this accursed thing.

If the Christian life be a course of *obedience* to the Divine Will, expressed in the clearest and strongest terms, every action of the Christian must oppose the principle on which the Slave-trade is founded, and the manner in which it is conducted. It is not necessary to repeat the general principles and prevailing spirit of the Christian religion. Let us suppose the worst. The Africans could be no more than our enemies. But in what have they injured the Europeans? Happy in their ignorance of the Europeans, and of European vices, they would

would spend their days in a tranquillity that those must be ignorant of, whose wants are multiplied without measure or end. Such is the state of the fashionable and luxurious part of mankind. But supposing they *were* our enemies, would the law of nations, or the law of God, justify their being held in perpetual slavery? Most certainly not. The religion of Jesus bids us, *Love our enemies*; and the utmost that prudence dictates, or religion justifies, is, to prevent them from injuring us. But they have never attempted any thing of the kind.

Superstition and bigotry might say, as they have said, "but they are not christians." It would be a wonder if they were. Of pure christianity they are totally ignorant. And if they judge of the christian religion by the conduct of those who call themselves christians, and who are their oppressors, they must suppose it to be of all others the worst religion, to justify such enormities. But even supposing that the christian religion had been taught them by men who understood it, and whose lives had exemplified the doctrine they taught; and that yet they had rejected it. The offence would not have been committed against men; and the punishment must have rested with him, who is perfectly acquainted with the nature and extent of the crime. Those who are for punishing the most obstinate opposers of christianity, know not the doctrine nor spirit of the christian religion. *For the son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.* The

only arms he ever authorised his disciples to use, werewisdom and innocence. They are to blend *the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove*. Truth requires no external aid to support it. Those who suppose it does, are unacquainted with its strength. To offer such support is like presenting a straw to up-hold omnipotence. With the meekness of wisdom enemies are to be opposed.

But arguments on this head would be endless. Christian *obedience* is justice, courtesy, hospitality, instruction to the ignorant, and relief in every kind of distress. And should a christian who had this world's goods, see even an African Brother in distress and refuse him relief, an inspired writer would ask, *How dwelleth the love of God in him?* The only real proof of religion is *fruit*. Christian *obedience* obliges the christian to avoid such a trade, if he be not engaged in it; and, if he be, to renounce it, and seek some honest means of getting his bread. Like the publican too, he must make restitution to the injured.

But again; if the christian life be an *imitation* of Jesus Christ, a follower of Jesus Christ ought not to engage in the slave trade; for *he came to preach deliverance to the captive*, and the Prophets inform us that his doctrine shall have a general spread. *Then war shall be known no more. Ethiopia shall stretch out her arms unto God. In his days the righteous shall flourish, and there shall be abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.* Then the text will

will have its complete fulfilment; *he shall deliver even the insulted Africans from deceit and violence, and prove to the whole world that their blood is precious in his sight.*

When Christ began to speak in the synagogue, he applied one of those Prophecies to himself. See Luke iv. 18. And then added. *This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.* His whole life was employed in promoting human happiness. *He left christians an example that they should follow his steps.* To imitate Christ is, to deliver the captive, to be zealous for every good word and work. *Imitation of Christ makes directly against the slave trade.* Once more;

The christian's life may be considered as an *example* to others. Would God the generality of christians viewed it in this light! But the law must not be changed to accommodate those who set it at defiance. The christian in his station, public or private, master or servant, let his situation be what it may, is to *shine as a light* in that situation. He cannot shine but in his own sphere. There are duties and virtues which, if attended to, do honour to christianity in the meanest station. But can a christian shine in the slave trade? Can he shine as a man stealer? Can he shine as a tyrant? Can he shine as a tormentor of mankind? Can he shine by contradicting the whole end of the mission of Christ, by eradicating every feeling of humanity, by acting the part of a demon, and by

becoming the scourge and curse of mankind? Every view we can take of christianity reprobates and condemns every part of the accursed traffic. The more a christian compares it with his religion, the greater his abhorrence, the more does he feel the want of a language formed by the union and under the influence of indignation and honour to convey his feelings in proper terms.

“ On such a theme, ’tis impious to be calm ;

“ Passion is reason ; transport, temper here.” YOUNG.

The next proposition follows of course.

III. *Every christian ought to do all in his power to put a stop to the infernal traffic.* The christian religion requires those who profess it, not only to do no evil, but to enter heartily into the design of Christ, *who lived and died that his disciples might no longer live to themselves, but to him that died for them.* Primitive christians professed openly that *they were not their own. None of us liveth to himself.* The christian life is a life of active virtue. Benevolence is a prominent feature in it. This is strongly recommended in the conduct of the good Samaritan. *Go thou and do likewise,* is the language of Jesus to all his followers.

The case of the wounded man was a strong one. It recommended itself to the feelings of humanity, without the aid of religion ; and it required a great deal of false religion to destroy those feelings. But superstition and bigotry dry up the last drop of “ the milk of human kindness,” and make a man
cruel

cruel in the name and for the honour of the God of compassion and love. But what was the case of the man robbed and wounded compared with the miseries of thousands and millions of stolen, enslaved, insulted, and wretched Africans! The doctrines, the precepts, the spirit of the christian religion say, Copy the example of the good Samaritan. Exert all your talents and all your influence to dry up the tears of the Africans, to meliorate the condition of those already enslaved, and to prevent the continuance of the abominable traffic.

Let the christian orator then, in every department in life, display the horrors of the trade. He may give full scope to the imagination. He may ransack earth and hell for frightful images, and be assured he does not exceed the truth. Thus the Abbé Raynal on this subject. "If the christian religion did really thus give a sanction to the avarice of empires, it's sanguinary tenets ought for ever to be proscribed. It should either be abolished, or it should disavow in the face of the whole universe, the enormities that are imputed to it. Let not its ministers be apprehensive of displaying too much enthusiasm upon such a subject. The more they shall be inflamed upon it, the better will they serve their cause. Tranquillity would be criminal in them, and wisdom will break forth in their transports." * The simple

* See Raynal's History of the Trade and Settlements in the Indies Vol. 3.

account of the sufferings of the Negroes is too much for the feelings of the humane to *bear*: What must it be for the slave to *suffer*?

Let the christian orator *expose the futile reasons*, and wretched sophistry of the advocates for this diabolical trade. All their arguments may be reduced to one, and that is, *its profit*. But if the trade be unjust and cruel, will the advantages arising from it to individuals, justify its continuance? This is an argument at which its advocates cannot look. But if profit or antiquity will justify wickedness of any kind, there is not an enormity which by this mode of reasoning may not be established. Put it into the mouth of a highwayman, as part of his defence at the tribunal of justice. How would it be considered? Would it not be considered as an insult to the court, and a proof of deep depravity? But what is the crime of a highwayman, who only takes the property I have about me, compared with his who steals my person, separates me from all my dearest connections, sells me like a beast, and puts me, a wretched slave, under the power of a taskmaster who insults my miseries to the end of my life? Is not highway robbery innocence itself, compared with this?

If you wish to feel this argument yet more forcibly, change situations. Suppose the English nation in the situation of the Africans, and the Africans in the situation of the English slave-dealer and with the same dispositions. The arguments which
establish

establiſh our right to do this enormous wrong, would likewise eſtabliſh theirs. Your children go out to play, or to do your buſineſs in the fields; the Africans who deal in the perſons of men, ſeize them. They are gone for ever. In vain will you weep. Your caſe is hopeleſs. To hear of their death would afford you pleaſure; but that is too much to expect. Not only children are ſtolen from their parents, but parents from each other. If Britons think it right to revenge an inſult offered to a ſhip, or an individual, by another nation; what revenge would they not think themſelves authorized to take againſt thoſe who practiſed ſuch enormities? Would any kind of vengeance be thought too ſevere? Were we to hear that our children and countrymen had burnt the plantations, and deſtroyed the perſons of their oppreſſors, ſhould we think they had rebelled againſt lawful authority? ſhould we ſuppoſe they had contracted any guilt? What did our fathers at the Revolution? Do we not call that Revolution glorious? Are not reaſon, and juſtice, and the rights of mankind, the ſame every where? Or are the Europeans equally to be juſtified when they reſiſt oppreſſion, and when they oppreſs? *Righteouſneſs alone exalteth a nation; but ſin is a reproach to any people.*

But it is inſinuated, that on its continuance the welfare of the Britiſh nation depends. Good God! What! the welfare, and almoſt the exiſtence

istence of Britain, so renowned for its love of liberty, depend on the most horrid slavery, and the greatest crimes which mankind can commit? Is not this the foulest libel? Britain, so happy in its climate, so fruitful in its soil, so inexhaustible in its resources, so capable of the greatest improvements! Britain, so blessed with every favor of providence and religion; yet Britain, whose constitution we have been taught to revere from our infancy, depend for existence and prosperity on robbery, oppression, and murder! If this be true, can any virtuous man value himself upon being a Briton? If this were true, every honest man ought to leave the country, and pray that a country so inimical to the happiness of mankind, might soon be blotted out from under heaven.

Thank God! these are only the exclamations of men *whose craft is in danger*, and who wish to make an uproar. We trust that mankind are too enlightened thus to become their dupes, and that the justice of Great Britain is so awakened as never to be again lulled to sleep. The people were easy, because they were ignorant that such enormities existed. But they cannot now disbelieve after such evidence as hath laid before them. Nor can they be easy under a sense of such enormous national guilt.

Another refuge is, but if we abandon the trade other nations will take it up. Be it so. Ought
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we to rob in company, least others should run away with the whole of the plunder. Is there reason or justice in such argument? It does not deserve a serious refutation. Let Great Britain show her magnanimity by giving up what she is convinced is unjust, and set an example of virtue to the surrounding nations.

But if the opinions of some of the wisest and best philosophers and politicians go for any thing on this subject, the Planters themselves would be benefited, were the Slave-trade abolished and slavery brought to an end. Thus Franklin, Montesquieu, and the present principal leaders of both sides of our House of Commons think. To which may be added, the account of a traveller through America. To their testimony might be subjoined the nature of things.

Dr. Franklin, whose judgment will not be disputed, observes, respecting America, that the labour of the slaves can never be so cheap there, as the labour of working men is in Britain. Any one may compute it. He takes into the account, the interest of purchase money, the risque on the slave's life, his cloathing and diet, expences and loss of time by sickness, loss by his neglect of business, (for neglect of business is natural to the man who is not to be benefited by his own care and diligence) the expence of a driver to keep him at work, and his pilfering from time to time,

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almost

almost every slave becoming, from the nature of slavery, a thief. He concludes upon the whole, that the labour of slaves in America, is much dearer than the labour of working men in England.*

To these observations of the late Dr. Franklin, may be added those of a late traveller through the United States of America.† Ten out of the thirteen United States have abolished slavery, and the others, he informs us, begin to think it their interest likewise to do the same. This writer draws a parallel between the state and conduct of the negroes in those states that have abolished slavery, and in those which retain the yoke; and he shews, that in the former, they are more faithful and industrious than in the latter: And, in a comparative view of the provinces that continue the servitude with those that have diffused freedom, he proves that the effects of slavery are universally pernicious.

‘ The difference (says he) between the negroes
 ‘ who are free and have received a decent educa-
 ‘ tion, and the others, extends itself to their very
 ‘ labours. The lands inhabited by the whites,
 ‘ and the blacks under these regulations, are in-
 ‘ finitely better cultivated, produce more abund-
 ‘ antly, and present us with the image of plenty
 ‘ and enjoyment. Such, for example, is the af-

* Political and Philosophical Works. † Brissot.

‘pect of Connecticut and Pennsylvania; but pass into Maryland and Virginia, and you will think yourself in another world. You no longer behold cultivated plains, country-houses exhibiting neatness and even elegance, large barns properly arranged and distributed; nor numerous herds of well fed cattle. The reverse. Every thing in Maryland and Virginia bears the prints of slavery. The soil unsheltered from the burning heat; lands improperly managed; houses falling into ruins; cattle small, and few in number; meagre and half starved negroes: in a word, real misery in the neighbourhood of every appearance of luxury.*’

There would be no end to extracts of this nature. The difference is founded in the nature of things. Can it be supposed, that men who have no prospect of benefit by their labour, will exert themselves? or that those who only move to the sound of the whip in a service, and for masters whom they have every reason to dislike, will either do so much, or so well, as the man who knows he shall reap the fruits of his care and industry? This is the best stimulus to improvement and exertion.

How often have I heard some of you who are farmers, and who now hear me, complain of being obliged to pay the tithe of your own improvements. Even this operates as a check to

* Monthly Review, Vol. VI. p. 541, New Series. industry.

industry. And if this produce such an effect, what must be the natural consequence of being deprived of *every* prospect of advantage? In proportion to encouragement, so is improvement. This has its proof in the great visible difference between all those countries where the farmer labours for himself, and where he labours for the owner of the soil.

But supposing all this reasoning were false, and the Slave-trade were the way to wealth. Yet the *profit* of it ought not to be put in competition with *justice* and the *happiness* of our fellow creatures. Robbery of every kind is attended with momentary advantage; and were robbers permitted to go on with impunity, some of them would acquire property and consequence: And should any body venture to expose the enormity of their conduct, and express a wish that they might be called to an account, *they* might step forth and say, 'We have acquired great property, we are the means of the circulation of a great deal of money, numbers depend on us for a subsistence; and if you abolish our trade, many will be inevitably ruined. You must not be too nice.' How would this reasoning be received? Is there nothing like this in the arguments of those who defend the slave trade?

In a word, then, may not all these arguments which we have mentioned be fairly reduced to this single point? Every Christian who has ability
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and opportunity ought to expose this *mystery of iniquity*.

There are also other means which can be made use of by all; and they are peaceable and constitutional. Numbers, in different parts of the kingdom, are trying their efficacy. The one is by petitioning the legislature to interpose its authority, and to put an end to a traffic which wounds the feelings of humanity, the enormity and villainy of which is now publicly known, and which, if continued, must, on that account, greatly increase the national guilt. Let us hope this application to our legislature will be general, and that every county, city, and town, in England, will unite in so glorious a cause. Besides, there is great encouragement to do this, as many of our Representatives have voluntarily taken up the subject, and have displayed an ability and zeal in the cause which do equal credit to their understandings and hearts. Their names who have sacrificed all party distinctions, and nobly united in the cause of humanity, truth and happiness, will *be had in everlasting remembrance*, and they well deserve the eulogies, thanks, and prayers of Christians of every name. May their united endeavours be crowned with success! May they henceforth labour only for the good of mankind! May they never differ in the end they have in view, human happiness, though they may approve of different means to promote that end! May their names
be

be mentioned with respect and gratitude, while the sun and the moon endure !

Another means which many thousands have adopted, is the conscientious disuse of West India produce, till the Slave-trade be abolished, and the negroes now in the West Indies be put under the protection of the law. This is a still argument, though a strong one. Every thing seems to unite to give it strength. The price of sugar, whatever be the real cause, must amount to a prohibition in many families among the poor. This must lessen the consumption. But greater numbers are disusing it from *principle*. The increase is astonishing. And if Christianity taught Paul to say in things that were *indifferent*, *If meat make my brother to offend, I will not eat any meat while the world standeth*; how much stronger the argument to avoid, not the necessities, but a few of the *luxuries* of life, which may be avoided with ease, and for which, in a little time, not a wish will remain. Every Christian is here of importance. Many poor Christians, if they were to see a man robbed and wounded, might pity him, but could not administer relief. But here, they may prevent the wounds of many by rendering their labour useless. Avarice will then leave the trade, from the same principle from which it first engaged in it. To address the humane feelings or justice of tyranny and avarice, is to address what has no existence: nor is there often any hope

hope of tyranny being ended, but with the patience of the oppressed. This the history of tyranny, from Pharoah to the present day, will abundantly prove. Christianity requires that each Christian should do to the utmost, though that utmost be but little, to alleviate the distresses and promote the happiness of mankind. Christianity requires that every Christian should pursue the same end with Jesus Christ, that is, to destroy the works of the Devil, and especially, that worst of all his works, the dealing in the miseries of mankind, called the *Slave-Trade*.

To conclude. The abolition of this trade falls in with the whole genius of the gospel, the prophets predict it, and it will be brought about by means. Let us be ambitious to be the instruments of so good a work, and rest assured of the approbation of our master. He will say, *In as much as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

Let the unfeeling remember, who they are whom Jesus Christ will reject. Those who have wanted humanity. Who *did not administer to the wants of the hungry and thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and in prison.* And if those who wanted this humanity *shall go into everlasting punishment,* where shall they go whose whole lives have been one continued scene of robbery, cruelty, and murder? They shall then know indeed,

deed, and to their utter condemnation, that Jesus will deliver their slaves from deceit and violence, and that their blood is precious in his sight! Come, Lord Jesus, Come quickly. Even so, that thy kingdom may be established, and peace, truth and righteousness universally reign. Amen.

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